My Book
Augusta Chambers

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# MY BOOK.

BY

AUGUSTA CHAMBERS.

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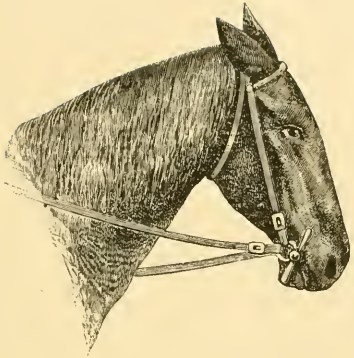
To Dan's Master.



"DAN."

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# *MY BOOK.*

# MY BOOK.

I 'VE had a dream, a pleasant dream,
Though some might hold it light—
A dream set 'round with happy hopes,
Ambitious thoughts and bright;
A dream for which I still must bless
The kind, consenting night.

I told it to a rose this morn,
Till every leaf astir
Seemed nodding back approval of
The secret whispered her;
Oh, rose, I kissed thy crimson lips
That thou didst not demur.

I told it to a brooklet next,
The sun looked in the brook,
The brooklet smiled, and then my dream
This sudden meaning took;
My heart it held for title page
And lettered it "My Book."

"My Book," to eyes that love me most,
Its treasures shall unfold;
Its covers—still, imagined ones
Of bonny blue and gold—
Fond hands, familiar with my own,
Delightedly shall hold.

And I have clothed each child of thought
In flowerful, bright array,
The gayer hues for contrast with
The somber and the gray,
And sorrow shall not linger long
Where joy can have its sway.

From every clime, from every land,
Where'er my feet have strayed,
I 'll pluck a fancy and a rhyme
To weave in sun and shade,
And they shall be transplanted where
They cannot die or fade.

And if at last it be my fate
To rest in some green nook,
Where only whispering grasses wave
And quiet stars may look,
Oh! still my proudest monument
Will be my "bonny book."

# A DREAM OF THE TROPICS.

THE twilight's last kiss, darling one,
Lies soft on the brow of the day,
And the great, golden crown of the sun
Is tipped with a star set in gray.
The sea-gull, in querulous tone,
Is chiding the fast-coming night,
While I, with my thoughts, sit alone,
And dream in the shadowy light.

The bending banana bows low,
By the salt breezes blown and caressed,
Like a maiden asmile and aglow,
Who droops on her lover's broad breast.
I would that the waves were as words,
With language akin to our own,
Or that *I*, like those white-wingèd birds,
Might mount and far seaward be blown.

There's an island far out in the deep,
And palms fringe its tropical shore,
My dreams lead me there in my sleep,
To meet my belovèd once more.
The forms of the dark natives fall—
Clad only by nature and God—
Like shadows, where cocoanuts tall,
To fern and to fig faintly nod.

The air is a wordless caress,
Like looks on the lips that we prize,
When the sea of the soul's tenderness,
Soft-surging sweeps into the eyes.
'Tis an "island of beauty untold,"
Of fruitful and fragrant delights,
Where the Day-god gilds morn with his gold,
And Cynthia silvers the nights.

An Eden engirts me I know,
And yet, like the scriptural Eve,
I 'm tempted—the apple hangs low—
I look o'er the waters and grieve.
Yes, e'en from this paradise here—
Eternal in summer's soft smile—
I turn—for my Heaven is there,
Far off in that Fijian isle.

## A LOVE LETTER.

IT cannot be that time can change
The heart's affections deep,
Or lull the thoughts of other days
Like weary babes to sleep;
For time and change have o'er me crept,
With wint'ry blight and chill,
Yet, as in days to come no more,
I'm thinking of thee still.

Last night the olden nights came back,
When wed to joy again,
Your arms a captive of me made
That did not mind the chain.
The curls I loved to call my own
Are tinged no more with gold;
That form so slight and boyish once,
Is manlier in its mould.

The lips that once with smiles ran o'er
  Are sweetly serious now,
While care and time hath given thee
  A thoughtfulness of brow;
But, oh! thy love is still the same,
  As when it first was won,
Still shining through my lonely life
  Like light from Heaven's sun.

While those who vowed they loved me once
  More distant grow and chill,
And all forsake me in my woe,
  I find thee faithful still.
Then let the world, in cruel scorn,
  Its voice against me raise,
Safe sheltered in my darling's love
  I 'll feel a wordless praise.

And though of Misery's bitter draught
  I 'm fated, love, to sip,
Oh, I 'll forget the nauseous cup
  Upon thy sweeter lip.
You will not prove that summer friend
  That goes with summer's light,
Like swallows, for some warmer clime,
  That plume their wings for flight.

You love me most when cloudy grief
  Her drops of woe doth send
To dim the laughter from mine eyes
  And make me need a friend.
You love me not for happy smiles
  Or merry words and light;
You love me for the soul within,
  These cover up from sight.

'Tis sweet, on murky nights and drear,
  To see one star shine through
The midnight darkness of the sky,
  And, eye-like, beam on you;
But sweeter still, when earthly eyes
  Have turned their lights away,
It is to know the eyes we love
  Like beacon lights will stay.

The love that 's born of joy is sweet,
  But when it lives through pain,
Oh, we may search the wide world o'er
  Nor find *such* love again;
Oh, though I cannot offer now
  The heart's first flower and fair,
Take thou the love that but for thee
  Had ripened to despair.

## THE LITTLE LONELY ONE.

I KNOW three tiny faces framed
In happy childish glee,
And yet a fourth unsmiling one,
Most piteous sweet to see.
A wee and patient pale-face saint,
All motherless and lone,
With wistful, rainy April eyes,
The little lonely one.

Among her light-robed playmates, she,
In robes of sorrow clad,
A cloudy speck upon their joy
Walks, prematurely sad.
While they, beneath a mother's smile,
Bask in love's noon-day sun,
She sees the shadow of a grave,
The little lonely one.

Come nearer, little lonely one,
Yet nearer while I speak,
Till in a kiss I sanctify
My soul upon thy cheek.
O, pure young sorrow, yearning life,
In grief and death begun;
God pity thee and lead thee home,
Thou little lonely one.

## WOMAN.

LIFE built up of sighs and tears,
Heart too fondly fashioned,
Drinking sorrow half her years
At love's fount impassioned.
Life with sacrifice replete,
Only blest in giving,
Set with fancies strange and sweet,
If to dream be living.

Strong, yet weak enough to err;
Stopping not to reckon
On the fearful cost to her
Should she heed love's beckon.
Crushed in spirit, anguish-bowed,
All but shame denied her,
Praying only for a shroud
And a grave to hide her.

Loving, not with half a heart,
But with all her being,
Steering on without a chart,
Rocks nor breakers seeing.
Mercy, pity, I adjure!
Bring not wreck upon her;
Let the lights be on the shore—
Signal lights of honor.

## AFTER THE RACE THE CROWN.

IT was examination day in town,
And midst a score of pretty girls there stood
The tutor stern, who had forgot to frown,
While one sweet bud (that verged on womanhood,
With wealth of shining tresses braided brown,
Forming a coronet about her head,
And eyes long-lashed and pensively cast down)
Began to read, and faltered as she read,
A farewell essay to this title wed—
"After the race the crown."

And in her speech, that teemed with fond "good-by's,"
She urged them onward to the true, the good—
Her girlhood's friends—beseeching them to rise
In youth's pure strength to nobler womanhood.
This girl, whose future still before her lies—
A misty avenue she gazes down,
With hope and purpose deepening in her eyes,
Firm in the faith that virtue and renown
Go hand in hand—O, youth, so little wise,
See ye no pitfalls 'twixt yourself and prize—
"After the race the crown"?

Ah, somewhere, down life's track, yet unexplored,
The deadly nightshade of temptation grows;
Through its false verdure shouldst thou be allured,
In life's new morn ambition's race would close,
For dark temptation knows a thousand shapes—
A devil, robed in angel garments fair,
It gives to sin each victim that it makes,
And sin, grown weary, gives them to despair.
O, then, be watchful, lest thy tears should drown,
With vain regrets, the eyes, but seeing now
Life at its best, and with expectant brow—
"After the race the crown."

## BY THE ATLANTIC.

OUR isle to-night is crowned and dressed
In a halo of moonlight sweet,
And the sea sobs over her sandy bars,
And lifts white arms to the shy, far stars,
Like a life that is incomplete.

And night must go, and the day will break,
And then, oh, soul of mine!
With lips aquiver and hearts that ache,
Who will be saddest for sad love's sake,
And parting which makes no sign?

As one who stands by a grave and hears,
"Ashes to ashes, dust to dust,"
My heavy eyes, 'neath their weight of tears,
See through a mist that never clears
The face of the morrow thrust.

## LOVE AND GRAMMAR.

THE happy sea and the sky to-day
Laugh in each other's faces,
The sun plays hide-and-seek with the spray
And whirls her in weird embraces;
I 'm tired of study—I 'll go and play
And leave my "possessive cases."

I 'm fond of Grammar—there's something in 't;
I take to the "masculine gender,"
When they have eyes of the sun aglint,
Brown eyes that are brave and tender;
Yes, Grammar, both in and out of print,
Is a study I 'd not surrender.

It 's strange that I never remarked before,
How dreams that my brain encumber
All run to the pronouns "you" and "your,"
Till I waken out of my slumber
Asmile in the happy sense secure
That I know my "singular number."

I never felt glad till now, at all,
That Grammar held near relation
To what society 's wont to call
A proper education;
I 'll get to "conjunction" near the fall,
If I master "conjugation."

## GOOD-BY, GREEN HILLS.

GOOD-BY, green hills, good-by!
Sun-crowned and daisy-dressed,
Would with the summer I
Might sleep upon thy breast.

Good-by, green hills, good-by!
Now towering reef on reef,
Or bending lowly nigh
To kiss away my grief.

Good-by, green hills, good-by!
Good-by to dead hopes, too–
Their only shroud a sigh,
Their parting breath adieu.

Their grave a hallowed spot,
Where, sole, sad mourner I
Shall weep alone, forgot.
Good-by, green hills, good-by!

# THAT DAY.

I KEEP it in the distance yet,
But like a cloud alway
It comes to dim my brightest thoughts
And tinge their gold with gray—
A blot upon my noon-day sun,
That dreaded, distant day.

It may be that the birds will sing
And all the hills be green,
And flowers to wooing winds that day
Their tender cheeks may lean,
But Sorrow's saddest showers shall fall
Upon my own, I ween.

'Twill be a day when trivial faults,
Forgotten—put from sight
As silent as the buried dead
Upon the hill to-night—
Shall hold for me no bitterness,
No thought of wrong or slight.

'Twill be a day when love alone
A longing ghost shall flit,
With burden of unguessed regret
At Memory's feet to sit,
And borrow from the banished past
Some thought to comfort it.

## PHILIP'S BOOK.

SO Philip's book is out, I 've gleaned.
What should my wonder be?
Since Philip's face has always seemed
A poem unto me.
His was the lofty brow of thought,
The soft and dreamy eyes
That seemed their color to have caught
From Heaven's bluest skies.

I 've conned with pleased and eager eye
These gems of Philip's mind,
And yet at each perusal I
Some newer meanings find;
I trace in every graceful line
The gentleness of heart
That worships low at nature's shrine,
Yet boweth not to art.

Ah! Philip's heart now proudly beats,
"The rubicon is past,"
And shadowy doubt abash'd, retreats,
His book is out at last!
And other books than this, I ken,
Will add to history's page,
E'en worthier books from Philip's pen
Shall grace the coming age.

## WAKEFULNESS.

I CANNOT sleep this fair June night,
I hear the crickets sing,
The tender moon is waning white,
And kissing everything.
Lean towards me thro' the starry space,
O, love, beloved of mine;
Hold fast my hand, or touch my face,
Or give my heart a sign.

I thought that time, with healing touch,
Would soothe our parting yet;
I did not think to grieve so much,
So little to forget.
In every dream I but renew
What all the past endears,
Then, false to hope, yet true to you,
I wake to sudden tears.

Seen dim thro' misty grief, there stands
Betwixt the sun and me
A shadowy day of clasping hands
And voiceless misery.

And yet, that day I 'd not exchange,
So steeped in utter woe,
For all these vacant ones and strange
That make the heart ache so.

O, take thine exile back again–
My only world as yet—
Or set me, love, a task less vain
Than striving to forget.
The future's fairest flowers for me
Life's border-bed might fill,
And yet some memory of thee
Would bloom among them still.

# MODERN FROU FROU.

YOU will know her by the rustle
Of her robes upon the stair;
You will know her by the perfume
That precedes her everywhere.
Taper fingers, jewel-laden,
Put the frescoed door ajar,
Modern Frou Frou framed within it,
Pictureth her own boudoir.

Fashion's darling—petted, pampered,
Dainty, tiny-featured face,
Half a child and half a woman,
Lovely, with a soulless grace;
There she stands, with fairy-slipper'd,
Wanton, dance-aweary feet,
Waiting for the head to greet her,
Nodding in the firelight's heat.

Now a trill of bird-like music—
Latest waltze, "La Tyrolie"—
Breaks the silence, wakes the dreamer,
From a painful reverie;
And a scarlet cheek is buried
In his beard's luxurious brown,
While two April eyes ashining,
Break the cloud—a husband's frown.

From the costly curtained cradle,
Feebly wailing, may be heard
Satin-cushioned, fashion's nestling,
Calling for the mother bird.
Such a frail and waxen blossom,
Thriving not in love-light's sun;
Feet that tripped the latest measure,
Come not to the little one.

Hireling arms must soothe to slumber
Latest burden-dawning life;
Modern Frou Frou means not mother,
Frou Frou meaneth less than wife.
Just extravagance and folly,
Rustling silk and glittering rings,
Tenderest cords she cares to play on,
Doting husband's purse's strings.

When we gaze upon ancestral
Pictures of the mothers fled—
Mothers of departed statesmen,
Mothers of our hero's dead—
Is it strange that we should wonder
When time turns the coming page—
Page historic of our Nation—
Will a "Frou Frou" crown the age?

## UNCERTAINTY.

AS morning deepens into noon,
And noon to night again,
Despairing thoughts o'er happier ones
Their mastery still attain,
Till joy's chameleon colors take
The duller hue of pain.

I hold your promise to my heart
And count your words by night,
As misers count their hoarded gold,
In secret—out of sight—
With greed which neither gives nor lends
The spendthrift of delight.

I know not where the future leads;
The past, I know, was brief,
The present is a troubled time
Of doubt and yet belief,
Where I but rise from hope's repast
To sit and sup with grief.

## THE LAST LETTER.

CAN it be, or do I dream
That you seem
Changed to me,
Grown estranged?
Tell me! for I cannot take
Half a heart, mine would break
Wanting more.
Somehow when your hand
Touching mine, sudden moved,
I began to understand
I it was that loved;
And your eyes that of old
Made the sun seem cold,
Now no more
Warm and thrill me as before.
Though I bound you,
With my arms clasp'd around you,
As doth ivy cling,
Cold and pulseless still I found you—
Love had taken wing.

Answer dearest,
  Has my dream faded out?
Be confessed—truth is best—
  Better far than doubt,
If 'tis true, I and you
With sweet love have done.
Best you tell me with your lips
That the race is done—
Better far than I should see
Love's eclipse.
Though we part, though thou art
Cold, indifferent grown,
From my mem'ry and my heart
Canst thou take
All that hath been—all you gave me?
Never, darling! though love die
'Twixt you and I,
And its grave be mine alone.
Should you will it,
We will never
On this side the shadowy river
Never meet, us twain.
  On this side the long forever
Never meet again.
  All I ask is—must I want it—
  Will you grant it?

Just your pictured face to keep
Love's first hungry pang asleep,
After parting.
Just your pictured face to say
(Tho' forever and for aye
Love be done, now mine own),
That you loved me yesterday.
In the days, lonely days,
Yet to be,
When I gaze on thy face,
Dearest face still to me,
I will strive thro' my tears,
Blinding tears, hot and wet,
To forget
Thou wer't false seemingly.
I will strive but to think
On its beauty, on its grace,
Stately head and wondrous face—
Deeply drink
Of the light within thine eye—
Light delusive, luring beam,
Gazing on it, who would dream
Love could die?
If perchance,
In some quiet hour
Memory's power
For a moment claim you;

Should my face come to sadden
Or to blame you,
Still think gently—
  Gently o'er our buried past;
Brief its joy as deep my sorrow,
Darkening over each to-morrow.
  Love must go but life must last.
Brooding night-fall creeping 'round me,
Joins the shadow that surrounds me.
  So good night, sweet.
Were you nearer I would fold you—
  Fondly hold you
Heart to heart and face to face,
In one tender, last embrace;
  But 'tis better as it is.
For with sight such yearning grows,
Slumbers sweet those dear eyes close
  Till the lashes that I love
Press and kiss my darling's cheek.
Gently mayst thou sleep,
And in dreams be blest—
  Softer dreams, more bright,
Than my pillow seek,
  For the night
Brings me darkness (shuts the light
From my foolish eyes, tear-weak),
  But not rest!

## IF I COULD DIE AND KNOW.

IF I could die and know
My loved and gone before
Would meet me at the gate,
My spirit-journey o'er;
If eyes that love me here
Would, mourning, dim with woe,
I'd be content to die,
If I could die and know.

If I could die and know,
In faith divinely blest,
Among God's chosen ones,
I evermore might rest;
If grief could purify
Through suffering tears that flow,
I'd be content to die,
If I could die and know.

If I could even know
That underneath the sod
I might forever sleep
In peace, forgiv'n of God—
Beneath the waving grass,
With summer blooms aglow—
I'd be content to die,
If I could die and know.

## UNDER A PALM TREE.

UNDER a palm tree, sitting listlessly,
I watch, with folded hands and silent lips
The distant bay which widens to the sea—
The sea, flecked white with far-off sailing ships,
And wonder if the self-same moon for thee
Our own dear shore to-night with silver tips.

Here in the land of citron and of palm—
Here in the land of olive and of date,
"Where every air is heavy with the balm
Of orange groves" and summer-tide, I wait,
Stirred still to sorrow, in this Eden's calm,
For one who lingers yet without the gate.

Under a palm tree Enoch Arden's wife
Had once a vision when the day was done,
When hope and fear were with despair at strife,
She ope'd the holy book at set of sun—
And lo! this passage, with a meaning rife,
Fell first before her where the page begun:

"Under a palm tree" were the words she read.
And pausing ever o'er the mystic line,
She prayed with fervent lips and bending head,
That God his message clearly would define—
Would give her sailor back alive or dead;
Then did he send this vision as a sign:

Upon an island where the sultry sky
Kissed into glistening heat the burning sand,
Where one great palm reared all its arms on high,
And holding o'er his eyes one screening hand,
Beheld she Enoch, gazing silently,
A shipwrecked sailor in a desert land.

And watching ever for some distant sail,
From dewy dawn to dreary dusk again;
So, love, watch I, with eyes for tears that fail,
And loneliness which deepens into pain,
For sight or sound of thee no favoring gale
Bears to the wanderer o'er the moaning main.

# SEPTEMBER.

SEPTEMBER, on the mountain tops,
  Is standing hushed and pale,
And over Summer's eyes lets fall
  Her soft, mysterious vail;
A gray-clad nun she walketh now,
  Between the sun and shade,
Or moves, a mourner loth to leave
  A grave but newly made.
The tender leaves and grasses still
  The Summer's livery wear,
Yet sadness seems to linger o'er
  The rounding of the year.
For though the flowers still look up,
  With incense on their breath,
We know their faces only wear
  The hectic flush of death;
And memories that the heart shuts in,
  Like pansies in a brook,
Bear only subtle sense of loss,
  And dreams that hope forsook.
I wonder how the seasons roll
  Within the heavenly sphere,

And if the angels ever weep
O'er memories sweet, yet drear.
I sometimes fancy half the gold
That God's September fills,
Has rifted somewhere through a cloud,
And fallen on the hills.

## THE UNFINISHED STORY.

THE manuscript unfinished lies—
Because each line I trace
Is interrupted by your eyes,
O sweet, warm, Southern face.
Our walks and talks, the things you said,
Side-glance and lash's curl,
Are dancing through my silly head,
And keep it all awhirl.

"I love, and I am happy, though,"
So sighed Camille's low tone,
When Armand's form had passed from view,
And she was left alone.
Alas! ill-fated, dead Camille,
With what devotion true
She clung to Armand, as I feel
Till death I'll cling to you.

My life, like hers, it oft doth seem,
Some dismal end will know,
Though now 'tis such a fairy dream,
With rapture all aglow.

O, heartful days, how fast ye fly,
I know not one is gone,
Until the night comes drifting by,
To meet another dawn.

Away! away! I'm idling yet,
For still that face of thine
To blind and dazzle me is set,
Like sunbeams on each line.
O, work unfinished, loth I'd be
My sweet excuse to tell,
For who could sympathize with me,
None having loved so well.

## WHEN DAY IS DONE.

WHEN day is done,
And the drear night
Wafts out the light,
Then, dearest one,
Think I of thee,
Longing to be
In thy embrace;
Heart near to heart,
Never to part,
Face close to face.

What, without thee,
Through the long years,
Seen through my tears,
Can my life be?
Plans that I rear,
Castles in air,
Fade incomplete;
Life without thee
Cannot but be
Robbed of the sweet.

Sighing forlorn,
Of thee bereft,
What is there left?
Only to mourn;
As some poor bird,
Broken in wing,
Never to sing
More will be heard;
So, love, must I
From thee apart,
Wounded at heart,
Grieve till I die?

When day is done,
And clouds of night
Waft out the light,
Then, darling one,
Ne'er can I be
Happy with thee,
In thy embrace;
Heart near to heart,
Never to part,
Face close to face.

# EN VOYAGE.

BLOW over the waves to the north, O breeze
As light as the heart in me—
Over the waves and the sun-lit seas
To a rose-twined cot in a bower of trees—
And bear to my darlings wee
The glad, sweet joy of my swift return,
Till watchful, fanciful eyes discern
A great ship sailing free;
Bearing me on to the other side,
Bounding home with the bounding tide,
Back to my darlings three.

Be pitiful, Time! Ah! take the light
Out of the long, long days.
Shorten the moments, shorten the night
Between the shore and my aching sight.
My aching eyes agaze
Over the billows night and morn,
With hunger out of such longing born
It cannot brook delays.
O, haste thee, feet of the hurrying tide,
Land me safe on the other side
In the dawning's purple haze.

## AMONG THE HILLS.

UPON the steep it was my wont to call
The Summer's lap, I linger ill at ease,
With heavy tears for love of you let fall,
While day slants goldenly among the trees.
And Time hath passed us since we last clasped hands
With no look backward, solemn-eyed and dumb,
While down the future's avenue there stands
Only Despair, though Hope still whispers, "come."

We shall yet find him where the shadows are,
Or hillward wandering toward some heavenly height,
Watching with far-off thought some falling star,
Swooning at sight of him athwart the night;
For well he loves sweet nature's varying mood,
The dewy day-dawn or eve's starry light,
And every hill-born blossom, humble-hued,
Holds still a precious meaning in his sight.

And yet, ah! love, so long I've waited here,
(For memory holds me, and I needs must stay,)
That flowers have sprung from ev'ry falling tear,
And many a night hath purpled for the day.
Perhaps among the everlasting hills,
On some celestial morn we yet may meet,
And I shall know thee by ecstatic thrills,
And life in death become at last complete.

## AFTER THE WALK.

ALL day the dark and inky clouds have
chased away the blue;
The sky 's been full of tears, my love, my heart 's
been full of you;
All day together, arm in arm, we 've walked
through rain and mist,
With feet that knew no weariness, and looks
that met and kissed.

So sweet to be together, love, what care for rain
or shine,
Since I am yours forever now and you are wholly
mine;
For who shall soul from soul divide where love
once sits enthroned,
The souls that in each other live—each by the
other owned?

Not earth, nor space, nor anything shall part us
so in twain,
But that we still in spirit, love, may commune
hold again.

A bud, so small I call it but the dawning of a hope,
Upon my little rose-bush near is promising to ope.

If in the morn I find the dew hath found my blossom out,
And if the sun should rudely stare to make her blush and pout,
I'll pluck her from these lovers bold ere time can make her rue,
And give her, like myself, away, my own true one, to you.

Good-night! for daylight's ashen face, displeasing, cold and white,
Is peeping thro' the window-pane to chill me as I write;
Then let me sleep while nature wakes (with cheek to pillow pressed),
And pray that some delicious dream may lead me to your breast.

## KISS ME.

KISS me with the lips that never tire,
Kiss me with heart and will;
Kiss me, love, with a kiss of fire
Till my very soul stands still.

Kiss me, love, in the dusk of eve,
Kiss me at rise of sun;
O, eyes, not lips, to language leave—
Kiss me, my darling one.

Kiss me, love, when the days are cold,
Warm me with smile and kiss,
Till sheltered thus in thy heart's dear fold,
I never the sun shall miss.

Kiss me, love, for my soul is sad,
And time heeds not my cry—
And I see a day, in mourning clad,
Of parting, which means—to die!

Kiss me, my love, and hold me fast,
Ere gold the morning tips;
I would have thy kiss the first and last
Upon my grieving lips.

# MY CHOSEN LOVE.

HE is not one of polished mien,
Or manners soft and fine;
But rich in manhood's honest strength,
This chosen love of mine.
His eyes—those windows of his soul—
Are lustrous, large and blue,
So clear that every passing thought
Comes shining frankly through.

No delicate, white hand is his,
But labor-soiled and rough;
Yet still in love's dear pressure strong
For me quite fair enough.
His voice? Ah! 'tis the master-key
That keeps my heart in tune,
As needful as the dews that fall
On thirsty flowers in June.

His love? How shall I guess its depth,
Unless I plumb my own?
He is my master, yet I'm queen,
His heart my precious throne.
Thus have I found thee, O my king!
My soul's ideal at length,
A woman in thy tenderness,
A giant in thy strength!

## UN TRISTE CŒUR.

DREARY drips the ceaseless rain
From the tear-o'erburdened sky;
Sobbing 'gainst the window-pane,
Nature grieves, and so do I.

Life is but a hollow show—
Rest, a thing I cannot find;
So my tears the rain outflow,
While my sighs blend with the wind.

Could I sleep, most blest were I—
Sleep that knows no waking more;
Oh! with folded palms to lie
In amen my bosom o'er.

# PERHAPS.

WHEN evening lights from happy homes are gleaming,
And moonlight kisses all the willing sea,
Peopled with longing and with hopeless dreaming,
Thought's craft drifts northward ceaselessly.
The Southern sunsets shed a sadder splendor
Than those we watched together on the shore,
And love, tear-christened, now grown doubly tender,
Looks back with dimmer eyes than those of yore.

"Whom first we love"—so saith my heart's own poet
In gentle verse—"you know we seldom wed."
He felt 'twas true, but I, ah! love, I know it,
Since fate and circumstance my feet have led
To distant lands, where thou mayst wander never,
Save in these waking dreams that bring thee near;
My dear, dead past that I embrace forever,
Chill and unanswering, yet so dear—so dear!

Yet ever when the noiseless night descending,
Leans with her moon-clasped mantle o'er the sea,
Some subtle essence, with my spirit blending,
Seeks through the soundless universe for thee.
Perhaps thy heart, in like impassioned longing,
Seeks still through space and solitude for mine,
But where we meet, our earthly natures wronging,
We still must part, and passing make no sign.

## NOT TILL THEN.

AFTER the tired face is hid
Under the friendly coffin lid;
After the vexed and weary soul
Passeth away from earth's control;
After the eyes have looked their last
Into a future gloom o'ercast;
Seeing naught but a pauper's crust—
Not till then will the world be just.

After the battle of life is done,
Ye shall be heroes, every one;
Shrouded away from mortal gaze,
Ye shall be waked by mortal praise;
After death shall each deed of thine,
Close beside thee an angel shine;
Freed from life's breath, and the tears that rust—
Not till then will the world be just.

## BETTER.

BETTER for me were his ship a wreck
In the gulf of an angry sea,
Than that he should live to come back and break
His plighted faith with me.

Better, far better, 'twould be to know
That the blue waves wrapped him 'round—
Where sea-nymphs wept as they laid him low,
And only the waters sound.

For tearful thought might yearning drift
To the bay of the peaceful past,
And I might catch thro' a cloudy rift
A gleam of my heaven at last.

But better far had we never met
In lands that I dream of still,
Before faith died, tho' the cross points yet
To my mother's grave on the hill!

# OUR SUNSET ON THE HILL.

THE wind's low voice was silent,
The whispering trees were still,
When last we watched the sunset, love,
Our sunset on the hill.
You said its glow was shedding
Its crimson on my cheek,
And that my hair was tangled in
Its last, great golden streak.

Then, in some sudden impulse,
You drew me to your heart,
As if 'twere heaven to hold me so,
As if 'twere death to part.
Low sank the sun, and lower,
And dark began to creep;
It stole the gold from out my hair,
The crimson from my cheek.

Yet there together standing,
With hand now clasped in hand,
We watched the solemn night descend
O'er all the quiet land.

I called your eyes the starlight,
  Because the sun had flown—
(How selfish to be wanting, dear,
  A starlight all my own.)

And then, like happy children,
  Still clasping hands we went,
With love's too slow, unwilling steps,
  Adown the hill's descent.
O, life 's one golden evening!
  I live to bless it still,
When last we saw the sunset, love,
  Our sunset on the hill.

## A LITTLE CONFESSION.

THE roses in my garden
Are like my lover's cheek;
I kiss their pale pink leaves and think
Of things I may not speak.
My violet's dewy fragrance
Is like his balmy breath,
And joy is with his kisses born,
That meets too quick a death.
O, love beyond possession,
Beyond love's reach that grows,
How shall I teach my heart again
Its latent calm repose?

Sweet thoughts, his vision framing,
Like waves on ocean's shore,
Still on and on o'er dreamland's strand
Break rippling evermore.
Last evening when the sunset
Flamed red against the west,

My eyes explorers turned and found
  New depths in his unguessed.
And when, with arm about me,
  He glanced from face to form,
It must have been the sunset's glow
  That made my cheek so warm.

It must have been the sunset
  That made his lips so red—
A deeper and a sweeter dye
  Than leaves my roses shed.
O, love, I must not love you,
  Change, like a chilly day
That, shining in the morning, turns
  Ere nightfall cold and gray.
Break, if you can, the fetters
  That bind your willing slave,
And give again the freedom back
  She does, yet does not, crave.

## EYES.

EYES whose glances warm and deep
Fall aslant as sunbeams might,
Till the lashes o'er them sweep,
Blending shadows with their light;
Eyes that ever seem to say,
"All my power I know full well,"
Turn, O, turn from mine away—
Free, O, free me from your spell!

Why, O, why those glances long,
Under arching brows that steal,
Telling more than word of tongue,
Reading all I'd not reveal?
Speaking eyes, why haunt me yet,
Since another's life ye light?
Free me from this vague regret,
Leave me to my starless night.

## ADIEU.

FAREWELL, mon cœur, farewell!
When shall we meet again?
Ah! which of us may ken?
I know not; but, till then,
My thoughts with thee shall dwell.

Good-by, mon ange, good-by!
Ah! word in mourning dressed.
Poor orphan—pity's guest—
Forevermore unblessed,
Thy heritage—a sigh!

Je t'aime, ungardez vous.
Though fate and grief clasp hands,
And point to other lands,
Love dumbly, sadly stands
With eyes still turned to you.

## LONG AFTER.

A PERFUMED paper's purple tint
Whereupon your hand I trace,
Hath found me in the morning's glint
And brought us face to face;
Again your deep and quiet eyes,
'Neath lashes shaded brown,
And filled with meeting's dear surprise,
In mine glance gladly down.

For lack of power, whilst language faints
O'er words the heart essays,
And Time at Memory's easel paints
The unforgotten days,
Again your kiss upon my lips,
Holds will a willing thrall,
While brighter gold the morning tips,
And joy is over all.

Since last we met, of years a score
Have passed—those voiceless things
That mark Time's flight—and yet they bore
No healing on their wings;
But when amidst the hurrying throng
I've sought, yet found thee not,
Hope leaned on Faith, for Faith was strong,
And said, "Thou 'rt not forgot."

And so I knew ere I should sleep,
Past pain and misery free,
That Faith would true her promise keep,
And give you back to me.
Though many a flower-crowned month now flown
Hath bloomed and waned between
The morn that saw us part, mine own,
O! morn through tears still seen.

Yet, every June, my heart, my heart,
To blossom bursts anew
With memories sweet that bud and start
And whisper, dear, of you.
Ah! buried June that winter's snow
So oft hath shrouded white,
Though other summers come and go
And other moons at night,

Yet none for me like that I've lost
Shall in life's season shine,
For costliest love at love's dear cost,
And you and June were mine.
Since last your hand in tenderness
And blessing warm clasped this,
And "palm to palm," as Juliet says,
Proved "holy palmer's kiss"—

For you, "good pilgrim," did not "wrong
Your lips," when last we met,
But with a hand-clasp fond and long
Looked all your soul's regret—
A checkered path my feet have trod,
With trials fenced about,
And some that made my trust in God
Turn almost into doubt.

The world, poor cynic at the best,
Fate ne'er decreed my friend,
My life with longings cursed and blest,
Achieving nought will end.
I see you smiling now and then
O'er lines that meet your view,
But foolish things will slip my pen
Just as they used to do.

I never was so overwise,
Yet I am certain quite
That, looking through love's partial eyes,
You 'll read my meanings right.
Yon perfumed page atint and bright
With heartsease purple-blue
Upon my heart shall lie to-night,
And life's lost dream renew.

## JOAQUIN—POET OF THE SIERRAS.

NAME the title to songs unsung,
Man of the musical, rhythmical name—
Tender of heart and bitter of tongue—
Careless of praise and careless of blame;
Sorrowful singer! Oh, soul borne high!
Counting earth's dross so little worth;
Finding "more gold in the stars of the sky
Than all that hides in the grimy earth."

Wanderer! Wonder! New found world!
Warrior, wearing a poet's wing,
Dreamer of dreams, like wings unfurled,
That waft thee whither the seraphs sing;
Oh, to be even the high, white rain,
The heaven-born rain you love and praise,
To fall at your feet in my perfect pain,
Or weep in the wake of your lonely days.

Gather me up, as the sun the dew,
On wet-cheeked leaves in the long, late dawn,
Till I mix and mingle and blend with you,
And every trace of myself is gone.
This were something to live and know—
This were something to know and die;
Then find out heav'n and change and glow—
A far, fair star in your poet sky.

## AN OCTOBER NIGHT.

OCTOBER'S sad, repentant tears,
Outside are slowly falling,
And sudden winds to frowning hills
And fickle mists are calling.

No stars to-night, no summer moon
Nods like a silver feather,
Or sinks behind the hills too soon,
Yet leaves us still together.

I conjure up the tender past—
Sweet siege of eyes beseeching—
And grim experience evermore,
This truth my heart is teaching:

"Thou canst not bid time bide for thee,
Or hope, on love's endeavor,
Wait patient while the golden day
Of chance slips by forever."

"Oh, sweeter self," if thou wert here
With one strong arm around me,
Stern duty yet might blush to tell
How much *un*-armed you found me.

And if beneath their sleepy fringe,
Your eyes, "night's darkest edges,"
Should, looking into mine, renew
Their fond expressive pledges,

I think my lips would lean to yours,
And all my lone life misses
I'd find, albeit to lose again,
In longed-for, dreamed-of kisses.

# TELL HIM.

O VIOLET, tell my love the Spring is near,
And all my heart with her approach keeps pace,
She dropped thee from her garland with a tear
Of dewy grief upon thy tender face,
So thou shalt be my messenger, and bear
Love's longing to the lordliest of his race.
O, tell him, if he listens, he shall hear
The sigh my spirit sends through time and space
Across the " waste of waters," lingering where
His envied presence glorifies the place.

O, sea breeze, tell my love the sea is wide—
But never—never than my love more deep–
Nor would I for the pearls with her that bide,
Give back his precious promise which I keep.
O, tell him how I pray for August-tide,
And beck'ning to him, murmur in my sleep
Soft welcomes to my darling—dream espied,
With eyes grown hopeful, that forget to weep,
Till folded to his heart—the true, the tried—
I in a moment joy's full harvest reap.

## "THINK NOT, THO' I HAVE CEASED TO WEEP."

THINK not, tho' I have ceased to weep,
That I remember not;
Or that my bitter wrongs will sleep—
Thy falsehood be forgot.
O! let the years bring what they may,
I reck not, care not more;
I am not what I was to-day,
For hope itself is o'er.

You came with dreams to fill my heart
Of all that still might be,
Until of life itself a part,
Thy love became to me.
Within thy sheltering arms secure
I smiled at sorrows past,
And deemed affection would endure,
And death but part us last.

Poor fool! in my belief how blind—
Won over by a sigh,
Or words more hollow than the wind
That idly passes by.

I might have known the world's deceit
Too well again to trust,
Or worship at an idol's feet
So often turned to dust.

But there was something in thy smile—
A candor in thy look,
That made thy heart seem all the while
To me an open book.
And though thy speech was poor and plain,
Thine eyes a language knew
That said to me, when words were vain,
"Ah, trust me—I am true."

No more, no more. I vainly seek
In memory's yesterday
Some thought to cool the burning cheek—
The heart's dull pain to stay.
All 's over now—all joy and pride,
Ambition, hope, are o'er;
I wander, parted from thy side,
Alone forevermore.

## LIFE'S EVENING.

LIFE'S evening—ah! 'tis here with me at last,
Not as I deemed in girlhood it would come,
To find me—youth's brief morning being past—
Safe in the fold of some fond, happy home;
For subtle shadows steal my day's last gleam,
And touch with dusky fingers life's lone eve,
While spectral fancies, born of sadness, teem
To sit all night at Memory's loom and weave.

And yet, it is not sadness fills my breast,
So much is past 'twere best had never been,
For in *my* desert, each oasis blest,
Proved but a mirage that my eyes had seen;
I've had my day of love, of "Knight and Lance,"
Of grand ambition and of high resolve—
These things that make up half of life's romance,
'Round which the years, the tireless years, revolve.

I count some silver in my hair's dim gold;
The roses, too, with life's lost June are gone;
It seems so very sorrowful, this growing old,
To wake and find it night instead of dawn!
I've missed so much, then is it greed to grudge
Old Time, the usurer, all the days he's ta'en?
Yet could I live them over—who shall judge?
I might for joy still pay the interest—pain!

## COME BACK.

SINCE thou art gone the sun hath ceased its shining,
The silent days, love, creep too slowly by,
And all my heart is filled with vague repining,
Which breaks thro' tears and many a hungry sigh.
Joy fled with thee, the day that saw us part,
And left despair sole tenant of my heart.

Thy kisses still upon my lips are burning,
Thy looks of love are mirrored in my soul;
Nor doth my strife avail to soothe the yearning
Whose passion mocks at reason and control.
Vain task! to quell the grief that will not sleep,
Thou being gone, how can I choose but weep?

Come back again! mine eyes in tender longing
Turn toward the land by thy possession blest;
While hopes dream-born delusively are thronging
With sweet expectancy my aching breast.
Come back again, heart of my choice,
And break the silence waiting for thy voice.

## WHILE WESTWARD WANDERING.

SUMMER is glad on the land again—
With hint of flower and bee,
And glad with summer I speed amain
To the joy that is waiting me;
Rivers to ford now, and steeps to scale—
Mountainous passes with gloom between,
But the driver's laugh and his merry hail
Echo thro' hollow and deep ravine.
On, on, past river and ranche we're whirled
Where never the smoke of a cabin curl'd—
On, on, to that "outermost edge of the world"
Where its rounding rim is seen.

Where the ends of the mighty plains begin—
Like a scroll in Jehovah's hand—
To curve and curl into hillocks green;
On, on, to the longed-for land,
Where the beautiful, brave, brown-bearded men,
Those gods of the golden hills—

("And each, please God, is a gentleman,"
However he toils, or tills)—
Swing swarthy arms with the pick on high—
And the long, white day like a bride goes by,
Till the hills leap up to the leaning sky—
And fade as the sunset wills.

Yes, on I press toward the happy hills,
To bide with the "tried and true,"
Till envious Time his sand-glass spills
And another year slips through;
But if it should be the good God's will
To close the book I hold—
With the leaf turned down in the middle still
Before the tale is told—
I'd like to be laid on the hill's broad breast
That seemeth to keep its vigil best
Over my people there of the West—
Over their hearts of gold!

## CONSUMMATION.

THERE is a hint of summer in the air,
A touch of blue on skies of dappled gray,
And nature's broad rejoicing everywhere,
Hath woo'd me from my solitude to-day;
With buoyant step I climb the giddy hill,
And gaze with longing toward the eastern slope
With fond imagining, and eyes that still
Look forward with the tender light of hope.

The trees are budding into green again,
And mating birds begin to build the nest;
My bird is coming over hill and plain—
I hear his pinions fluttering toward the west,
(It may be, ere his coming, you will sing
Above your brood, oh, happy mother-bird,
But here I'll wait him since he's on the wing,
Wrapped in the rapture of a bliss deferred.

Not all your tender twitterings o'er your young
In leafy branches on yon swaying tree,
Shall rival words of love upon my tongue,
When time gives back my darling unto me.)

Not all the forest knows so sweet a voice
As the lost music that shall greet me soon—
The missing note—the grand, harmonious choice
That sets my summer to eternal tune.

Oh, sweet expectancy; oh, night, that makes
The day the brighter for the shadows past,
Forever more be blest of hope that wakes
To dear realities from dreams at last!
Oh, shining day, that now to dusk hath paled,
Seal up my happy eyes—with sleep relieve—
Ye were but signals and my ship is hailed,
I sight the sails, and joy must know reprieve!

## QUESTIONING.

WHY are lips that lean no more
To us when we list,
Just the sweetest of the store
Ours have ever kissed—
Tho' of lovers half a score,
Ours could not resist?

Why are eyes that glance away—
Eyes we long to meet—
Just the sweetest any day,
Tho' they thus defeat
Love at hide-and-seek at play,
Naughty eyes and sweet?

Why, if thro' an orchard green,
Wandering, one should spy,
Ripening in the sun serene,
Red-cheeked apples nigh—
Must the farthest apple-queen
Catch the longing eye?

All our proneness thus to grieve
For the fruit that grows
Just beyond us, I believe,
Woman's nature owes
To the fact that Mother Eve
Picked the fruit she chose!

Thus it is in everywise,
Thro' this life untrue;
If you long for hazel eyes
You must do with blue,
And the author of your sighs
Wastes no breath on you!

## BABY MARGARET.

BABY Margaret has eyes
Wondrous big and blue,
Peering up in odd surprise
Sunny lashes through.

Baby Margaret hath skin
White as winter's snow,
Cheeks with dimples dented in
Where the blossoms grow.

Baby Margaret hath rare
(Like to waving wheat)
Yellow-tinted, curling hair,
Living sunshine sweet.

Baby Margaret's shoulders white
Are such lovely things,
That we tremble lest we might
Soon discover wings!

Baby Margaret, trusting one,
Hath such clinging arms,
When her smiles have sudden grown
Into wee alarms.

Tiny Margaret, baby-queen—
In her subjects' eyes,
Reigns right royally, I ween,
Where her kingdom lies.

Baby-queen, with smile or pout
Ruling all she can;
Coming woman, who can doubt,
Greater than the man!

## THE BARD'S GUDE WIFE.

FROM "THE MAN O' AIRLIE."

"I'LL place it here, my Jamie's seat,
Beside the window-sill,
That he may hae what he ca's sweet—
A glint o' heather hill—
To flavor, as he says, his meal,
And yet I ken it noo
My Jamie likes, the thriftless chiel,
A bonny, soft seat, too;
And that 's na' so poetical
As glint o' heather hill!
I mun'na let the dinner spoil
Nor let the haggis spill;
There 's not a simmer on it yet,
My Jamie likes it sae;
A sprinkle mair o' salt I 'll get
And then the cloth I 'll lay,
Oh, what if o'er it chanced to boil
When I was not aboot,
What would I dee, for it would spoil,
And smoke and burn, nae doot?

And that would be by far mair sad
Than spoiling song or rhyme,
Which I've nae doot puir Jamie, lad,
Hath din a mony a time!
When Saunders brings the cabbage in
I'll put it on wi' haste,
And then I'll hae but time, I ween,
To make the dumpling paste.
Eh, dearie! I've a lot o' cares,
Of troubles big and wee;
I'd like to fare as Jamie fares—
Have nothing else to dee
But cover bonny paper white
Wi' rants and rhymes sae bra',
And on a cloud, both morn and night,
In fancy flee awa';
Yet when the bairn upon my breast
Smiles a' my kisses at,
I find that I like nursing best,
I could no' gie up that!
Lie still, ye wee, ye winsome bairn,
An' dinna wake until
Your dreaming daddy kimmeth hame
Across yon heather hill.
Sae late! sae late! why comes he not?
He stays, I ken it weel,
Wi'in some shady woodland spot,
The summer's breath to feel,

Or with wide open eyne to see,
Wi'in the still o' noon,
A single leaf frae some green tree
Coom driftin', driftin' doon;
As if it were a letter sweet,
All full o' meanings grand,
Adrappin' slowly at his feet
Frae some immortal land;
Or now he stands wi' dreamy look,
Far up the mountain side,
Or peerin' doon wi'in the brook
To watch the sil'er tide.
Ah! Jamie, you 're a thriftless one,
A listless, idle chiel,
An' yet I love ye weel, my mon,
An' yet I love ye weel!"

# LEAVE ME.

LEAVE me, thou heartless deceiver,
Lure me no more with thy wiles,
Turn to some new-found believer
Soon to be snared by thy smiles.
Take back the tender devotion,
Promising calms evermore,
Déep but as treacherous ocean,
Wrecking my soul on its shore.

Teach me where Lethe is rolling;
There, with my lasting regret,
Under its waters consoling,
Oh, let me die and forget!
Dost thou not fear retrospection,
In the long years yet to be,
Sorrowful-voiced recollection,
Whisp'ring forever of me?

Proudly thy cold lip is curling,
Masking with baseness thy scorn,
Why should the shadows unfurling
Cloud for one moment thy morn?
Smile on—there 's one that remembers
Over the smouldering past,
Justice stands fanning the embers.
God be thy judge at the last!

## AFTER THE PLAY.

HAPPY, you call me, gay and light,
Happy, because my laugh rings clear;
But after the curtain falls at night,
After the music, after the light,
When my painted roses are washed from sight,
Lo! on the cheek's despairing white,
Burneth the brine of a bitter tear.

With thought for prompter I sit alone,
And then the play begins aright,
Laughter and mirth are put to flight;
And, sad to be to myself made known,
With heaving bosom and hands clasped tight
I hug the grief that is all my own—
After the curtain falls at night.

Tinsel, mockery, falsehood's prey—
That 's what I am at the curtain's rise,
All that is truthful put away,
Art is all that public prize;
Time for laughter but not for sighs—
Put them by till after the play,
And after the music dies.

# MOTES IN THE SUNSHINE.

COME out in the sunshine, darling, for the clouds have blown aside,
And left a canopy overhead, of blue, that is clear and wide.
I've been at the open window one-half of the live-long day,
With an open book before me, and eyes that were over the way.
Come out in the sunshine, darling, and pass by the window—do,
My flowers are dying to see you, and so is their mistress, too!
Whenever our foolish quarrel comes into my foolish head,
I weep for the willful nothings out of my anger bred.
I'm jealous, dear, and I grant it; but you are an arrant flirt,
And whenever you smile on others I feel so vexed and hurt.

And she—why, she wasn't pretty; her face—I but saw in it
What I 've seen in a dozen like her that couldn't talk a bit.
A meaningless smirk and simper, a hat on her nose's tip,
Only a painted picture, with Paris rouge on her lip.
Give me a natural woman, as well as a natural man,
But one that is constant—show me this miracle if you can.
I must shut the window down, love, for splash on the paper here
Has fallen a great big rain-drop, the size of a great big tear.
I long, how I long to see you, and, just with a kindly word,
Bridge over the gulf between us, and own, perhaps, I have erred.
I wish that the rain was over, I wish that my life was, too,
And—well, if it was, I wonder would it matter much to you?

## MARSH MURMURS.

THE jelly-making days have come,
The stickiest of the year,
When I 'm "obleeged to stop to hum"
And daily duties share,
And times are anything but "rum,"
Though "bottling time" is here.

O'er pans of unpicked fruit I pore
Till every limb grows numb,
And paw the festive berry o'er
'Twixt finger and 'twixt thumb,
Until I think I quite abhor
The gooseberry and plum.

When in some melting, rapturous mood
I court the gentle muse,
And feel my very soul imbued
With soft poetic dews,
I 'm asked to read Red Riding-hood
And tie the baby's shoes.

Anon my spirit drains the draft
Of misery to the dregs,
When I forego the poet's craft
To "garter up her legs,"
And after that am ordered aft
To count the chicken's eggs!

Alas! how unromantic are
These days with churnings fraught,
That come my vine-clad themes to mar
And genius set at naught,
Since butter making 's *but-a* bar
To higher range of thought.

# THE DEAD CITY.

"*Ashes, ashes; nothing but ashes.*"

THOU dear, dead city of my hope and love,
The fever of the fire laid thee low,
And snows shall fall thy ashen face above,
And Winter, with her numb, white fingers sew
Thy shroud in shuddering silence, sad and slow,
Yet, city of my love, I cannot go!

I fain would linger, tho' thou art not here;
As mourners count the sorrow and the gloom
Of e'en the place that held the sacred bier,
So linger I about thy mountain tomb,
And still the sun rides up the empty day,
All nature smiles the same and thou away!

Thou liest low, oh, city of my choice,
And yet methinks I hear thy spirit sigh,
Thro' each deserted street, in prophet voice,
"My death was but a crucible to try,
The metal of the hearts that purer rise,
The brave, true hearts, that suffering purifies.

"Ye are not homeless, ye that wander here,
Altho' the latch-string and the hearth be gone,
For in God's soil an acre for a tear,
Shall be recorded on some brighter dawn;
The hills eternal hold thy future lands,
And homes are waiting there, 'not built by hands.'"

## THE BLIGHT IS AT THE CORE.

LET my kisses fall upon thee,
And my tears, as did the dew;
Heard we not his vows together,
Faded rose-queen, I and you?
Withered now thy leaflet's splendor,
All thy fresh, sweet fragrance o'er;
Still the rose my cheek is dyeing,
But the blight is at the core.

Dost remember how the crimson
Of thy leaflet's midst my hair
Trembled with a sweet emotion
On the night he called me fair?
How the moonlight thro' the casement
Shone our fond embraces o'er?
Still the rose my cheek is dyeing,
But the blight is at the core.

Rose, dear rose, if I were lying
Faded, cold, and like thee, dead,
Those false eyes that looked so tender
Not one pitying tear would shed.

Love! it was not love he gave me,
Shallow passion, nothing more;
Still the rose my cheek is dyeing,
But the blight is at the core.

When the moon the world is bathing
In a flood of silvery light,
Sad at heart, alone, forgotten,
Gaze I out upon the night.
Flowering hope's brief season over,
Reign too brief, forever o'er;
Still the rose my cheek is dyeing,
But the blight is at the core.

Busy life is all about me,
But the hunger at my heart,
Unappeased, and yet incessant,
Pierces like some cruel dart.
Smiles around the lip may hover,
Yet the soul be bruised and sore;
Still the rose my cheek is dyeing,
But the blight is at the core.

## WINTER-WEARY.

I GAZE adown the chill white street
With shivering dread appalling,
And sigh that Seventy-seven I greet
Where Northern snows are falling,
While panoramic fancy sweet
Is fairer scenes recalling.

With hands outstretched before the grate,
To thaw those frozen members,
I very gravely contemplate
The few fast fading embers,
And long to sail away, elate,
To lands without Decembers.

O, bear me, bark of memory,
And shorten space between us,
"Land of the Southern Cross" to thee—
Thou lov'liest that hath seen us;
Rise, radiant Rio! from the sea,
More fair than fabled Venus.

O, mist along the shore and bay,
Thy kissing face uplifting,
Give me to see the palm tree's sway
Where sun and shade are shifting;
Where murmurous waves away, away,
To distant deeps are drifting;

Where Corcovada 'gainst the sky
Her mossy neck is craning,
And tall Tijirca towering high,
All summer-robed is reigning;
Where day and dusk dissolve and die,
And wondrous moons are waning;

Or where the lake a diamond gleams
Set deep in golden flowers,
A fairy haunt for poet-dreams
In hush of summer hours;
Where Nature, flow'ret, wood and streams
With tropic splendor dowers;

Where Padre, Madre, far at sea,
Stand gazing at each other
In might of mountain majesty,
A moss-clad Father—Mother;
While lone Azuca to the lea
Stands sentinel and brother;

Where skies bend low to palm and date,
  Caressing airs to fashion;
Where wild'ring hues on sunset wait,
  And brief love buds to passion;
Where first we met—O past! O fate!
  O present! cold and ashen.

As some swift eagle in his flight
  Falls wounded near the æric,
I drop from dream-land's lofty height
  To common places dreary;
Where snows enshroud me day and night,
  And I am winter-weary.

## LOVE'S MIDNIGHT.

SO all ends thus
'Twixt us two?
Grieve me,
Leave me
Like a day grown
Dark and sad.
Hardly glad
Enough for you.

Blanched my cheeks,
Their meaning only—
That I'm lonely,
Very sad and lorn.
So the heart speaks,
Each dumb tear
Telling dear
That I mourn.

Like a dream
Came you,
Can I blame you
If of love you tire?

If I alone
Now to-day,
And for aye,
Feel its quenchless fire?

Have your eyes
Weary grown
Of my own
All unmeaning ones?
Can I blame you,
Missing quite
All their light—
As the sun's?

No, my tongue
Can but frame
Your dear name
With a blessing—
With a love trill.
Mine, a loving—
Past all proving
Beyond guessing.

Should earth cover
Form and face,
Leave no trace
Of one who loved so,

Ere the summer's over,
Say 'tis well
She doth dwell
Past life's woe.

But with twilight,
From my prison
Grave-arisen
Shall I roam—
Grieving for thee,
Brooding o'er thee,
Even from my spirit home.

# BEYOND THE BAY.

THE work-day face of the weary town,
Kissed by the dying day—
Now dimmer grown in the twilight's frown
Fades as a mirage may;
Our ship to the open sea bears down
Beyond the beckoning bay.

The sentinel stars troop out—I stand,
In a raptured revery,
For tenderer far than human hand
Is the wind's caress to me—
My face to a fierce, fond blush is fann'd
By the breath of the salt, sweet sea.

O heaven above, and O depth below!
Between ye both once more
My thoughts drift back to the "long ago"
Like wrecks that drift ashore—
For never again can come I know
The dream that I dreamed of yore.

If tears of women let fall for men
  Fell fast on thy breast, O sea!
The day of the deluge would come again
  And never a land there'd be—
And desolate, sorrowing souls drift then
  To the bay of eternity.

# AFTERWARD.

WHEN I left you, love, I was bitter, proud;
The day looked into my face,
And hid its smile in a frowning cloud
Till dimmed was its shining grace.

Out of your sight my tears fell fast;
The shower is over though—
An April grief, like your love, 'tis past,
And who shall care or know?

I've walked and talked with the hills to-day;
My love has been unkind—
The solemn woods look grave and gray,
And nod to the rustling wind.

Only a word or a look unmeant,
A look perchance of scorn,
And out of this is the discontent
And pain of the present born.

How shall I win him back again?
Tell me, O flower! O sun!
For since we parted, ah me! since then,
Life's hopes are all undone.

O, soul ahungered that must be fed;
Soul of my life a part,
Why will ye crave that human bread,
The love of a human heart?

What was I but a toy to him?
An hour's change, no more,
And what has he given me back again?
A sorrowful heart and sore.

## "NO NAME."

I WONDER if most lives, like mine, go wrong;
I wonder if all loves, like mine, go by;
I wonder if in shadow, all along,
My days must languish till the day I die?

Last night a firefly shot athwart the black,
Re-crossed, and glittered out of sight once more;
Eyes of lost love! like thee they turn not back
But leave the darkness darker than before.

Last night I watched the moon ride up the sky;
A smoky cloud, like incense, in her wake;
Like thee, O cloud, so must I deify
All things beyond me for heart-hunger's sake.

Sometimes, in dream or trance—scarce which I ken—
Fair, fadeless faces, yet familiar ones,
With pallid smiling, beckon me; and then—
I touch a river's brink that darkly runs.

A boat is crossing from the further shore,
I watch the rower grim with bated breath,
My heart's slow beat his dip of muffled oar—
And some have known the voyager as Death.

## "CHICAGO;" OR, KILLED IN THE MINE.

THE FOREMAN'S STORY.

"HE was only know'd as 'Chicago,'
Among the boys out here,
A rough, hard-fisted miner,
But one that the boys called 'square;'"
And Harry, the foreman, pausing,
Shut down on a rising tear.

"To work whar' thar' wa'n't no danger,
Chicago hadn't no use,
An' thar' wasn't a chap more willin'
To load her or light a fuse,
Nor a heartier cry on the hillside
When he fired an' let her loose.

"He were tall as a pine an' straighter,
With a ringin' Western laugh,
And a mouth that was always hidin'
A smile or a word o' chaff;
An' broader across the shoulders
Than men of the camp by half.

"And no one know'd how it happened,
Or jest who fired that blast,
Till the boulders stopped a flyin'
And the powder cloud was past;
'Twas then we seen Chicago
Were over the range at last.

"He lay thar' white an' writhing,
His blue eyes open wide,
The boulder that had fetched him
Imbedded in his side;
And afore we'd fairly reached him
He jest gasped twice an' died.

"An' the boys stood white an' trembling
Afore the sickening sight,
Then they gathered him up as gentle
As a sleepin' babe at night,
An' bore him on a shutter
To the hospital on the height.

"An' about an hour after
Big Jim come down to the mill,
And I seen that his hands was bloody–
But something bloodier still
He held in the one he reached me,
That I were to keep until——

"They know'd what to do with the body,
And the things Chicago owned—
Not countin', of course, the money
The poor chap owed an' loaned;
For when a man's done breathin'
He can't be dunned or boned.

"'Twas only a crumpled paper,
This thing Jim gave to me,
With writin' on it, may be,
But I didn't care to see;
It looked so red and dreadful
I was glad to let it be.

"I know'd Chicago were reckless,
But a squar', right-minded chap,
With an eastern wife who'd left him
On 'count of some mishap;
Or 'cause her folks had riches
An' set in luxury's lap.

"But just afore that blastin'
He'd taken a different streak;
He'd bought some chairs for the cabin,
And paid up his debts to a week;
An' hadn't been fightin' the tiger—
Not anything, so to speak.

"An' I hear'd the boys allowin'
His wife was comin' back,
An' that was why Chicago
Had given the bar the sack;
But I reckon 'twas only rumor
Or the boys was off the track;

"For the days an' the weeks together
Went on in their usual way;
Chicago worked harder than ever,
Was sadder—with less to say—
Like a fellow disappointed,
Whatever had been his lay.

"The night o' that fatal blasting
I could n't sleep nor rest,
The dead were thar' in my cabin,
An uninvited guest;
An' I wondered about the paper
They had found upon his breast.

"In a few days after the fun'ral
Thar' come, in a female hand,
A letter sayin': '*My husband*
*Has claims there, I understand,*
*Pray send me his personal papers*
*Or titles to grants of land.*'

"And never a sign o' sorrow,
And never a word o' pain,
For the lad death got the drop on,
Did that cruel note contain;
For I read it over keerful,
Then, foldin' it up again,

"I took the crumpled paper
That Jim brought down to the mill,
And straight'nin' out the wrinkles,
Almost against my will,
I read thar' the name of the woman
That claims Chicago still.

"So I sent her that bloody letter—
Thar' war' nothin' else to send,
For the cottage upon the hill-side
War' mortgaged without end;
And the lot Chicago owns now
Was give to him by—a friend.

"And I doubt if the heart unlovin',
That promised but never came,
Will meet that nobler spirit
Gone out with the powder's flame—
To prospect alone, forever,
His undivided claim."

# WAVEWARD.

OPEN your arms to me, sea, my lover,
Take me again to your billowy breast,
Laugh in my face, or with salt tears cover
My love-set sun in the far lost West.

I will go back to the land of spices
Where the sun-god dips in a sea of gold,
Where love for a love, love's only price is,
And the blossoming days like leaves unfold.

We will drift back o'er the sea together,
I and my old-time friend regret,
Where a still moon hangs in the stiller ether—
Steer for the stars that never set.

Where mountains touched by the sun's desire
Reach ever up from their sea-swept base,
Like a hungry soul that is reaching higher,
With longing lips to the sky's soft face.

Where black-browed men in the market places
Drink from the gourd as a chalice brim,
And the naked babes of the dusky races
Laugh in the freedom of life and limb.

Anchor at last in the star-gemmed crescent
Of some still bay on a balm-born night,
Dream in an orient iridescent,
Lotus-lulled to a dim delight.

What if then o'er the present's level,
Over the slumbering slope of the past,
Eyes in whose light my own held revel,
Seek me and find me out at last.

Should I again of the fruit partaking,
The dead sea apple of other years,
Find that the dream had a bitter waking,
Water the bliss with the brine of tears?

What is it lures me, love or passion,
Over the waste of the waters again,
Out of life's remnant still to fashion,
Perilous garment of pleasure or pain?

# WAITING.

THE down was on the thistle-top,
The peach's cheek was red,
And warm September, autumn clad,
To gray October wed,
When last with lingering looks we strayed
Our favorite haunts among,
While silence, offspring born of love,
To speech unuttered clung.

Ah, many-a sober year since then,
All solemn-eyed and dumb,
Hath passed upon its changeless way,
And cheerless others come,
To touch with not ungentle hand
My hair's abundant gold,
And mind me in their voiceless way
That I am growing old.

Yet, tho' the shadows lengthening grow,
As dim life's sunset gleams,
And tho' I only see thee now,
Within the heaven of dreams,
My lips no vain complainings pour
O'er barren life's estate,
But with a saddened patience, love,
I am content to "wait."

# CALEB PLUMMER.

FROM "THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH."

## PART I.

THE time was Christmas, and the earth, clad
in its robes of snow,
Looked on the poor with chilling eyes, unpitying
want and woe.
Within a poor and narrow room, but neat with
toil and care,
Old Caleb Plummer sat and worked one day in
winter drear.
Beside the table, strewn with toys his honest
hands had made,
The old man sat and tried to sing while still he
plied his trade;
For times were hard; and he was poor, and worn
with toilsome years,
A sightless daughter claimed his love; one—lost
at sea—his tears;
Yet still, for Bertha's darling sake, he worked with
patient heart,
And strove to keep the piteous truth and Bertha
far apart.

"We 'll drown it in the bowl, my boys," he sings
in trembling tone;
A slow but gentle step is heard, and he is not
alone;
For Bertha stands behind his chair, and as she
softly speaks,
The old man turns with eyes of love, and tears
upon his cheeks.
"Dear father, I have dressed myself to welcome
John and Dot,
For this, you know, 's my natal day; dear father,
is it not?
How do I look?" once more she pleads, too
meekly to be vain,
And Caleb, with a tender pride, now turns to look
again.
"Why, darter, dear," he fondly says, with hands
upraised to bless,
"You seem to me an angel in a brown merino
dress."
"And is our little room quite nice?" she asks, in
accents sweet,
"O yes, O yes," the old man says, "it 's homely,
child, but neat.
Of course it isn't 'zactly, dear, as grand as some
I 've seen;

But then, it's sich a cheerful room, so tidy-like and clean.
And there 's the paper on the wall; sich handsome paper, too;
You scarce can see it, darlin', for the picturs hides the view."
"Yes, father, I remember now. Dear brother Edward's face
Smiles on us from the oaken frame just o'er the mantel-place."
"Yes, darter, yes; and then there's me, asittin' here by you,
The great, brass buttons shinin' on my handsome coat of blue."
And Bertha murmurs, "Yes, of blue;" then adds, through half a sigh,
"The color I can just recall within the blessèd sky."
"Yes, darlin', and I'm half afeard"—his voice more wavering grows—
"'Taint 'zactly jist the thing for me to have sich handsome clothes;
For, darter, they are far too good—too good for me to wear."
"O, father, nothing is too good for you who are so dear!"

"But then, ye see, the little boys, they follow me about,
And when they sees my handsome clothes, O, how they laugh and shout;
And there 's the beggars that I meet, with neither shoe nor hat,
They looks for something handsome out of sich a coat as that!
You orter see me, Bertha dear, and then the way we live!"
"I see you, father, just as if I had the eyes you give.
Yes, there you are, dear father, with your dark-brown, curly hair,
And looking young and handsome yet, your brow unmarked by care.
O, I can see your laughing face, and kindly, merry eyes;
Your figure rather stout, you know, but just a goodly size."
"Yes, Bertha darlin', rather stout." "O, not too fat," she adds;
"But, O, so active, young and light—just like some happy lad's!"
"Now, darter darlin', don't ye talk no more like that again,

For it you do I really b'lieve I shall be gettin' vain!"
"No, father, but you must not think your Bertha can forget;
It 's late, and there is work to do, while I am idling yet."
And speaking thus the blind girl feels her way across the room,
Then sitting down begins to ply deft fingers in the gloom.
Now can it be the wind outside, or can it be a voice?
Ah! yes, 'tis Tackleton's; but why should Bertha's heart rejoice?
A blush o'erspreads her pallid cheek, and in her sightless eyes
There shines love's hope and tender light, while in a fond surprise
She asks—"Dear father, do you hear? It is our master kind,
But why does he his true heart hide a voice so rough behind?"
"O, darlin', it 's a way he 's got," old Caleb quick replies;
"And all the time he 's talkin' so he 's winkin' of his eyes."

And now the cruel master's step upon the stair is heard,
And poor, undreaming Bertha's heart is fluttering like a bird;
And Caleb sings, with choking voice, "We 'll drown it in the bowl,"
While fear and hope are clasping hands together in his soul.
In blusters brutal Tackleton, with visage hard and cold,
Who, in a loud and angry voice, begins discourse to hold.
"What! singing are ye? singing, man—O, I will teach ye soon
To sing another kind of song and to a dif'rent tune!
I'm glad you can afford to sing, while you are still in debt,
But if the work 's not home in time you 'll not a penny get!
And here, you—Bertha—what 's her name—that 's mooning over there,
I want to speak a word with you—well, woman! do ye hear?"
"O, always light and gay with us, dear master," Bertha says,

While Tackleton begins to stare in blind amazèdness.

"The budding rose-tree that you sent—(I've kissed the buds, each one)—

I placed upon the window-sill, that it might see the sun;

And tho' this morning, when I woke, I could not see its bloom,

I heard its voice, dear heart, its voice—its song filled all the room!

For ah! its odor is its voice, to those who may not see."

"Well, lunatic," the master says, "what's that to do with me?"

And then, as Bertha shrinks away, in timid, wondering fear,

He says: "Be ready, girl, to meet my bride that's coming here,

With John and Dot to tea to-night, and talk to her of me;

And tell her what a match I'll make, and what a husband be!"

The glow, like sunset, fadeth from the snow of Bertha's cheek,

While with a bursting heart she strives for fitting words to speak.

"Your bride," comes with a wailing sigh, through grieving lips and white.
"Yes, girl, I s'pose you've heard of brides and weddings ere to-night!"
And then, with rude, uncourteous nod, and rough good day and brief,
He leaves meek Caleb dumb with fear, and Bertha dumb with grief.
Gone! really gone? and Caleb turns his doubtful face around,
And murmurs, as departing steps outside more faintly sound.
"O, have I been deceivin' her, through all the years that's past,
And only just to go an' break her lovin' heart at last?
I b'lieve that man was never born as others is I likes,
But made in some ere hardware shop of rusty nails and spikes!"
And softly thus, the poor old man, in self-communing speaks,
Till gathering tears, unchecked, begin to trickle down his cheeks.
A pause—a long, unbroken pause—then Bertha's voice breaks thro',

While sudden April in her eyes shuts out their
patient blue.
"O, father! I am lonely in this sad, unchanging
night;
I want my eyes, my willing eyes—O, give me back
my sight!"
"I'm comin', comin', darter dear, what can your
old eyes see?
They're here beside you, darlin' one, where they
shall always be."
"Then look at sweet May Fielding first, and tell
me is she fair?
And younger, too, than I am now, and has she
darker hair?"
"Why, darter, yes—a handsome lass—a good one,
too, is May;
And she has darker hair than yours—much darker,
I should say.
Yet no"—with eyes now fondly bent on Bertha's
fair head down—
"Your hair is golden, darter dear, and hers is
golden-brown.
But darter, such a form as hers I never saw
afore,
Ther ain't no dolls more gracefuler in Tackleton's
hull store.

And then she's got the sweetest smile, and, O, such lovely eyes."
"Such eyes! such eyes! O, father dear, how could you?" Bertha cries.
One look upon her streaming cheeks, her heaving heart's unrest,
Then with a sob he catches her, and folds her to his breast.
"O, darter dear, what have I done? Forgive me, darlin', do!
This poor old heart would break before it brought a pang to you."
"Hush, father, let me kiss away the tears I caused to fall,
For John and Dot will soon be here, and Tilly, too, and—all,
Ah! now I hear the sound of bells, I'm sure they must be near,
So smile that they may feel assured they're welcome, father dear."
Hark! merry tones are heard outside, amidst the ring of bells,
And Tilly and the baby's voice the happy chorus swells.
Now honest John and merry Dot, both light of heart and purse,

And May, with Mrs. Fielding, comes, and Tilly Slowboy—nurse!
"Ah! Caleb, Bertha, are ye well?" John's cheery voice sings out,
While Dot, just like a happy bird, goes chirruping about.
"Now, Tilly, go and spread the cloth, for we have come to dine;
I've brought the chicken and the cake, and John has brought some wine.
So, Tilly, put the baby down, or give the boy to me,
And, John, you stir the fire up, while Caleb steeps the tea."
The humble feast is ready now, and chairs are drawn around,
While Tilly, scorning etiquette, sits down upon the ground.
A knock announces Tackleton, the miserly of heart,
Who enters, holding in his hand a single sour tart.
The proffered gift is quickly dropped upon an empty plate,
And passed to Tilly, sitting on the floor beside the grate.

'Tis Dot who offers it, and says, with mischief in her eyes:

"Here, Tilly, put that tart away, and keep it from the flies."

"O, yes, mum," Tilly answers back, with jaws extended wide.

"The flies is werry troublesome; I'll put it all inside!"

Down at a mouthful goes the tart, while laughter fills the room,

The smile-lit faces and the wine dispelling all the gloom,

And hearty John slaps Caleb's back, and asks him for a speech,

While heads around the table nod their glad assenting each.

"Then here's to him that sailed away, a many a year ago,

To golden South Ameriky, my own dear boy, ye know;

A brave and handsome lad was he, and well he loved sweet May"—

And Caleb on his thread-bare sleeve, now wipes a tear away—

"But he has gone—my darlin' boy, this old heart's hope and pride,

So here is peace to him that's gone, and blessin's to the bride.
Here's wishin' and a hopin', too, ye know, ye understand,
That him she loves may never sail to some ere foreign land."
Now warm and generous Dot speaks out, with brimming eyes and heart,
While Bertha, with her own sad thoughts, sits from the rest apart,
"Ah Caleb! many a change of late, has come to me and you,
I'm married"—"Yes," blunt John puts in, "and got a baby too"—
"Why John! you ought to be ashamed; what can the man be at?
Here, take a leg of chicken, John, and stop your mouth with that."
"Here Caleb, man, we want a song"—"Yes, yes," on every side—
"A song"—it's John that's speaking now—"in honor of the bride."
"Well, John, I'll sing my fav'rite song; you know it Bertha, dear,
Yes, John, I'll sing ye all the song my darter likes to hear."

And Caleb once again strikes up, "We 'll drown
it in the bowl,"
While only love and pleasure now, are guests
within his soul.
"We 'll drown it in the bowl, my boys," comes
o'er and o'er again ;
"We 'll drown it in the bowl, my boys," in one
unceasing strain.
"We 'll drown it in the bowl, my boys," till smiles
begin to play
About the mouth of honest John and Dot and
gentle May.
"We 'll drown it," he once more begins, in feeblest
accents o'er,
When John exclaims, "That 's very nice, but ain't
you got some more?"
"No, John, I think that 's jest about as far as I
ken go,
You see, I 'd like to sing the rest, but then that 's
all I know.
There 's Tilly got a splendid voice, suppose we
hear from her ;
Come, Tilly, sing us all about your bold young
sail-i-yer."
So Tilly sings "My lovyer was a sail-yer boy so
bold,"

Till she forgets that she is poor, and Caleb that
he 's old.
The song is o'er—"So fold the cloth," Dot says,
"if all are done,
And Tilly, run and get the cards, we 'll have a
game for fun."
While Caleb, Tilly, John and Dot go bustling in
and out,
Pray, what does Mrs. Fielding talk to gentle May
about?
Her tone is querulous and sharp, and frowning is
her brow,
While Bertha, with averted face, is listening to
her now.
"Well, girl, you know I 've labor'd hard and toiled
full many a year,
To keep a shelter o'er your head and clothes for
you to wear.
That crisis most unfortunate your father that
befell,
His failure in the Indias, has ruined us as well.
And now that he is dead and gone, we must 'mid
strangers roam,
Unless you marry Tackleton, and give us both a
home."
"O, mother, let your lips no more reproach my
tardy will;

Your wish shall my obedience claim, though loving Edward still.
So fare you well, my sailor-love—my Edward true and brave,
My hand I give to Tackleton, my heart is in your grave."
Ah! Bertha's lips are parted now, in eager, glad surprise,
While hope sings, like the fabled swan, its sweetest ere it dies.
And as she whispers to herself, there 's triumph in her tone—
"Why is it, since she loves him not, that life seems brighter grown?"
All gaily 'round the table now the little party crowd,
And play at cards and fortunes, too, with laughter clear and loud.
Dear God be thanked, who lends the poor of joy at least a smile;
And so upon a merry scene the curtain drops a while.

## Part Second.

A bitter night—no friendly stars to light it with
their glow—
Discovers Caleb on his way to Dot's house through
the snow.
And this is happy New Year's eve—ah! who shall
say for whom?
For fortune's favored ones it 's joy, for poverty it 's
gloom.
With tottering step, on Caleb plods, regardless of
the storm,
While boisterous winds with freezing breath be-
numb his aged form.
A light out-streaming o'er the snow his straining
eyes now catch;
A few more steps—the house is reached, his hand
is on the latch.
But first a timid knock he gives, 'tis Dot that
ope's the door;
Good Dot, the pride of honest John, the angel
of the poor.
"Why, Caleb, man, come in, come in! Is any-
thing amiss?
There must be, when you venture out on such a
night as this!"

"Yes, Dot, I'm very ill at ease, for darter Bertha's sake;
You see I 've been deceivin' her"—his voice begins to break,
And lowly on his bosom now his head begins to droop;
While Tilly, with a face of fear, comes to complete the group.
Her eyes are saucer-like with fright, and in her wild alarm
She almost drops the baby from its nest upon her arm.
"O, mum, I 'm nearly scared to death, and such a night, too—O!
Here comes the blind girl feelin' of her way, mum, through the snow!"
"My darter Bertha comin' here? Then I must go away."
"No, Caleb, best that you remain and hear what she will say."
And then with kind, detaining words, that ne'er can soothing lack,
And hands of only loving force Dot gently keeps him back.
All eyes now seek the opening door till on its threshold stands

Blind Bertha, with disheveled hair and outstretched, groping hands
To little Dot, adown whose cheeks a rain of pity steals—
With sad, unseeing, moveless orbs, her darkened way she feels.
"O, Dot, dear, I have come to you, you will not turn away—
We 've had an angel in our house, I knew it yesterday.
A genius good, whose generous soul supplied our every need;
So rough in way and manner, yet so gentle, dear, in deed.
And when this morn the village bells pealed for his union, Dot,
To one—to one who does not love, because she knows him not,
I thought my very heart would break"—here Caleb needs must groan—
"What 's that! what 's that!" she feels her way to where he sits alone.
One touch upon his shoulder laid, what need, what need of eyes!
Then, with a blind instinctiveness, "My father here?" she cries.

"Yes, darter, I've been listenin' to your secret all this while,
Until I've grown so sad I think I never more shall smile.
I feel as though a lump of lead was lyin' on my breast;
And it will stay there, darlin', till the truth is all confessed.
You see your path in life has not been very clear and good,
And so I've tried to soften it and smooth it all I could.
I've told you things that were not true, and, darlin', now and then,
I've changed the character and ways of women and of men.
And, darlin', Tackleton is not the noble man you think"—
Here Bertha from her father's touch surprised begins to shrink—
"He's set me tasks, a many one, to finish in a day,
And work that I have always found much heavier than the pay.
For, darter, he is hard and cold, a cruel master, too,
And little of a friend he's been to either me or you."

Away from out his sheltering arm, like flowers
beneath the sun,
Poor Bertha droops in agony, and wails: "What
have you done?"
While sob on sob convulses now, with wildest
grief, her frame,
And Caleb's eyes are filling fast with drops of
bitter shame.
"O! darlin', O! how can I bear to see the hot
tears fall
From out your poor and blinded eyes, and know
I 've caused them all!
I 'll go away—far, far away, or anything you
please,
But do not let me see you weep, such tears—such
tears as these."
"No! no!" she murmurs, clinging now with fear
to Caleb's arm,
As if 'twere all the shelter left between herself
and harm.
And now to Dot she makes appeal, while grief
her tears renew:
"O, you will not deceive me, Dot, but tell me—
tell me true.
Look yonder, where my father sits, and tell me
what you see,

And tell me what the home is like he toils to keep for me!"
"Well, Bertha, dear, across the room a poor old man, bowed low,
Sits in a worn and ragged coat, with hair as white as snow."
Here Caleb, with an eagerness half ludicrous to note,
Exclaims: "Oh, don't take everything, jest leave my handsome coat!"
"Hush, Caleb, man," Dot answers back, with would-be look severe,
"I am determined Bertha now the honest truth shall hear."
And then, despite his pleading look, continuing again,
She says: "Your wretched home can scarce keep out the wind and rain.
And there beside the fireless hearth—no light to warm or cheer—
In cold and want your father works by day, from year to year.
Deep lines, deep lines of care have plowed their furrows on his cheek—
And yet he bears with toil and wrong, with spirit ever meek.

O! hard and desolate his life—yet for his sightless child
With love's dear care description touched each object till it smiled!"
As summer sunshine through the clouds comes peeping after rain,
So sorrow-stricken Bertha's face grows flushed and bright again.
On mute and wondering Caleb now her kisses fond are poured,
And then she cries, "I see! I see! It is my sight restored!
To think I 've lived so many years and never knew you yet—
I owe so much that gratitude can never pay the debt.
And O, to think I might have died, and never, never known
I had a father fit to be a king upon his throne!"
"Then do you love me, darter dear, forgiving all I 've done?
And—" here his question 's kissed away before it 's half begun.
"O, father, let caresses speak all that my lips would say;
I 've now an idol for my love that naught can take away."

Hark! hark! for rumbling wheels are heard outside upon the road,
And joyous tones in noisy glee some new surprise forebode.
Wide opens now the clanging door to let the party through;
The first, a handsome, manly youth, and clad in navy blue,
Old Caleb's eyes are on him fixed, till with a shriek of joy,
He totters forward, crying out: "It is, it is my boy!
My Ed'ard brave who went away to plow the raging main,
To golden South Ameriky—my boy come home again!"
And Bertha now is folded to her brother Edward's breast,
While kisses on her blinded eyes and wan, white cheeks are pressed.
And John, and Dot, and Tackleton, and with her mother, May,
Look on in glad astonishment, without a word to say.
Yes, e'en the master's heart of stone begins to warm and melt,

And only tenderest sympathy on every side is felt.
"No longer now," brave Edward says, "dear father, shall you toil;
And now no longer labor rough my sister's hands shall soil.
For many a shining coin I've brought from out the golden South—
And we shall have a happy home and food for every mouth.
And gentle May shall be my wife and cheer me with the smiles
I've dreamed of in my lonely watch through long, dividing miles.
So call our friends and neighbors in and let us dance and sing,
For I would have my welcome home good cheer and pleasure bring."
As joyful Tilly hastes to break the news to every one,
What is it Caleb has to say to gloomy Tackleton?
With eyes upon his Edward bent as on some wondrous prize,
He turns to where the master stands and says, with beaming eyes:
"Jest look at him, my blessèd boy"—in tones whose pride increase—

"O! what a hornament he'd make for some one's
mantel-piece!"
Then, glancing up in mild mistrust upon those
features rough,
He says, "He'd never do for yours, he isn't
humly nuff!"
And now the honest country folk, with Tilly at
their head,
Flock in, the merry dance to join, by May and
Edward led.
Old Tackleton deserted stands, no partner can he
get;
One couple more, upon the left, would just com-
plete the set.
But hark! a penny-trumpet voice ('tis Tilly's—
saucy elf!)
Says, "If he can't get no one else I'll dance with
him myself!"
"Then here," he mutters—touch'd again with
disappointed ire—
"Just take this wedding bauble, first, and throw
it in the fire!"
"O, yes, I'll take it," Tilly says, then adds, with
wicked glee:
"But p'raps I'd better keep it, sir, it might come
in for me!"

She slips the golden circlet on, and then by fun
possessed,
She swings bewildered Tackleton quite out of
breath and rest.
And Caleb, now, clasps Bertha's waist and whirls
her in the dance,
While clumsy John grows light of foot beneath
Dot's loving glance.
And thus the hours glide swiftly by, beguiled
with dance and song,
While Sorrow dies at birth of Joy, forgetful of
each wrong.
All reunited once again, contented, happy, all.
And so upon the final scene I let the curtain fall.

## Last Words.

If, by some blazing, winter's hearth, bright eyes
this story trace,
If looks of kindly interest be mirrored on some
face,
If sorrow for blind Bertha cause one pitying tear
to start,
Or meek, unmurmuring Caleb's life should touch
one gentle heart;

If this, my simple rhyming, bring the poor a single friend,
O, then, my task, a grateful one, is not without its end.
Let those whose hearts are lighter than the gold within their purse,
Good John and Dot's example kind among their poor rehearse.
O, cast away the proverb stale, both sides of Ocean's foam,
That charity, like hoarded wealth, "begins with us at home."
Give to the poor—let others' woes some thought from self beguile,
For when we soothe the stricken heart we see the angels smile!

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